

REMARKS

Claims 1-14 are all the claims pending in the application.

I. Objection to the Claims

The Examiner has objected to claims 8-14 for the reasons set forth on page 2 of the Office Action. In particular, the Examiner has asserted that claims 8-14 do not recite any steps that are drawn to a process of “producing” a display panel, as recited in the preamble of claims 8-14.

By this amendment, Applicants note that the preamble of claims 8-14 has been changed from a “method of producing a display panel” to a --method of inspecting a display panel--. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 8-14 satisfy 37 CFR 1.75(c), and therefore, respectfully request that the above-noted objection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

II. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Komatsu (U.S. 5,933,018).

Claim 1, as amended, recites the features of a circuit board having a driving circuit mounted thereon for lighting a display panel; and a conductive chassis functioning as a ground potential of the driving circuit, wherein the circuit board is fixed to the conductive chassis via a conductive member. Applicants respectfully submit that Komatsu does not disclose or suggest such a combination of features.

Regarding Komatsu, Applicants note that this reference discloses a liquid crystal display panel inspection device that includes a panel holder 10 having a mounting hole 11 that acts as a mounting section (see Figs. 1 and 2; and col. 4, lines 63-67). As explained in Komatsu, a liquid

crystal display panel 70 can be removably inserted in the mounting hole 11 in order to perform an inspection of the liquid crystal display panel 70 (see Fig. 1 and col. 5, lines 2-5).

As shown in Figs. 1 and 2 of Komatsu, the panel holder 10 includes a partition member 14 having a plurality of electrodes 13 disposed thereon, wherein the electrodes 13 are arranged so as to correspond to transparent electrodes 71 of the liquid crystal display panel 70 (see col. 5, lines 13-16 and 27-31). In Komatsu, in order to connect the electrodes 13 of the panel holder 10 to the transparent electrodes 71 of the liquid crystal display panel 70, a plurality of connection wires 21 are provided (see Fig. 1).

As explained in Komatsu, a first end of each connection wire 21 is connected to an electrode 13 of panel holder 10, and a second end of each connection wire 21 is provided with a terminal 23 which is disposed so as to abut one of the transparent electrodes 71 of the liquid crystal display panel 70 when the liquid crystal display panel 70 is mounted in the mounting hole 11 (see Figs. 1 and 2; col. 5, lines 46-49 and 52-56; and col. 6, lines 35-42).

In the Office Action at page 2, the Examiner has taken the position that the above-noted elements in the inspection device of Komatsu correspond to the features recited in claim 1 as follows:

- a. Partition member 14 of Komatsu corresponds to the “circuit board”;
- b. Transparent electrode 71 of Komatsu corresponds to the “driving circuit”;
- c. Electrode 13 of Komatsu corresponds to the “conductive chassis”;
- d. Terminal 23 of Komatsu corresponds to the “conductive member”; and
- e. Connection wire 21 of Komatsu corresponds to the “soft metal”.

As noted above, claim 1 has been amended so as to recite the features of a circuit board having a driving circuit mounted thereon for lighting a display panel; and a conductive chassis

functioning as a ground potential of the driving circuit, wherein the circuit board is fixed to the conductive chassis via a conductive member.

Based on the above-noted description of Komatsu, as well as the Examiner's above-noted correspondence between Komatsu and the elements recited in claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that Komatsu does not disclose the above-noted combination of features recited in amended claim 1.

For example, regarding the feature of a circuit board having a driving circuit mounted thereon for lighting a display panel, Applicants respectfully submit that the partition member 14 of Komatsu clearly does not have the transparent electrode 71 mounted thereon. In this regard, as discussed above, Applicants note that the partition member 14 of Komatsu is part of the panel holder 10, while the transparent electrode 71 is part of the liquid crystal display panel 70.

In addition, regarding the feature of a conductive chassis functioning as a ground potential of the driving circuit, Applicants respectfully submit that the electrode 13 of Komatsu clearly does not function as a ground potential of the transparent electrode 71.

In this regard, Applicants note that the Examiner did not explicitly address in the Office Action the above-noted functional language of "functions as a ground potential of the driving circuit". Applicants note, however, that the MPEP specifically points out that there is nothing intrinsically wrong in defining something by what it does rather than by what it is. See MPEP § 2173.05(g). A functional limitation must be evaluated and considered, just like any other limitation of the claim, for what it fairly conveys to a person of ordinary skill in the pertinent art in the context in which it is used." See MPEP § 2173.05(g) (emphasis added).

Furthermore, regarding the above-noted feature in claim 1 of the circuit board being fixed to the conductive chassis via a conductive member, Applicants respectfully submit that the partition member 14 of Komatsu is clearly not fixed to the electrode 13 via the terminal portion 23 of the connection wire 21.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that Komatsu does not disclose, suggest or otherwise render obvious the above-noted features recited in amended claim 1 of a circuit board having a driving circuit mounted thereon for lighting a display panel; and a conductive chassis functioning as a ground potential of the driving circuit, wherein the circuit board is fixed to the conductive chassis via a conductive member.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that amended claim 1 is patentable over Komatsu, an indication of which is kindly requested. Claims 2-14 depend from claim 1 and are therefore considered patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

III. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited.

If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may best be resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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